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On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "Rally Round the Flag, Boys!" and "Barefoot Boy With Cheek".)

ARF!

Benjamin Franklin (or The Louisville Slugger, as he is better known as) said, "A penny saved is a penny earned," and we, the college population of America, have taken to heart this sage advice. We spend prudently; we budget diligently. Yet, despite our wise precautions, we are always running short. Why? Because there is one item of expense that we consistently underestimate—the cost of travelling home for weekends.

Let us take the typical case of Basil Metabolism, a sophomore at UCLA majoring in avocados. Basil, a resident of Bangor, Maine, loved to go home each weekend to play with his faithful dog, Spot. What joy, what wreathed smiles, when Basil and Spot were re-united! Basil would leap into his dogcart, and Spot, a genuine Alaskan husky, would pull Basil all over Bangor, Maine—Basil calling cheery halloos to the townfolk, Spot wagging his curly tail.

But the cost, alas, of travelling from UCLA to Bangor, Maine, ran to $400 a week, and Basil's father, alas, earned only a meagre salary as a meter-reader for the Bangor water department. So, alas, after six months Basil's father told Basil he could raise no more money; he had already sold everything he owned, including the flashlight he used to read meters.

Basil returned to California to ponder his dilemma. One solution occured to him—to ship Spot to UCLA and keep him in his room—but Basil had to abandon the notion because of his roommate, G. Fred Sigaloo, who was, alas, allergic to dog hair.

Then another idea came to Basil—a stroke of genius, you might call it. He would buy a Mexican hairless chihuahua! Thus he would have a dog to pull him around, and G. Fred's allergy would be undisturbed.

The results, alas, were not all Basil had hoped. The chihuahua, alas, was unable to pull Basil in the dogcart, no matter how energetically he beat the animal.

Defeated again, Basil sat down with G. Fred, his roommate, to smoke a Marlboro Cigarette and seek a new answer to the problem. Together they smoked and thought and—Eureka!—an answer quickly appeared. (I do not suggest, mark you, that Marlboro Cigarettes are an aid to cerebration. All I say about Marlboro is that they taste good and are made of fine tobaccos and pure white filters and come in soft pack or Flip Top box.

Well sir, Basil and G. Fred got a great idea. Actually, the idea was G. Fred's, who happened to be majoring in genetics. Why not, said G. Fred, cross-breed the chihuahua with a Great Dane and thus produce an animal sturdy enough to pull a dogcart?

It was, alas, another plan doomed to failure. The cross-breeding was done, but the result (this is very difficult to explain) was a raccoon.

The results were not all Basil had hoped

But there is, I am pleased to report, a happy ending to this heart-rending tale. It seems that Basil's mother (this is also very difficult to explain) is a glamorous blond aged 19 years. One day she was spotted by a talent scout in Bangor, Maine, and was signed to a fabulous movie contract, and the entire family moved to California and bought Bel Air, and today one of the most endearing sights to be seen on the entire Pacific Coast is Spot pulling Basil down Sunset Boulevard—Basil cheering and Spot wagging. Basil's mother is also happy, making glamorous movies all day long, and Basil's father is likewise content, sitting at home and reading the water meter.

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Pacific Coast, Atlantic Coast, the great Heartland in between—not to speak of Alaska and Hawaii—all of this is Marlboro Country. Light up and find out for yourself.

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